<u>IN THE CLAIMS:</u>

1.   **(Currently Amended)**   A method for driving a solid-state image pickup device which stores, in a plurality of photo-electric conversion units, signal charges corresponding to an incident light during a prescribed time period, <u>each of said photo-electric conversion units being provided with an overflow drain (OFD) structure,</u> excludes surplus charges by an electric potential barrier, <u>said electric potential barrier being maintained between said OFD structure and each of said photo-electric conversion units,</u> reads out, after cutting off said incident light by a cut-off means such as a mechanical shutter, said signal charges by grouping said photo-electric conversion units into a prescribed number of regions, and outputs image signal from all of the photo-electric conversion units by repeating the read-out procedures, which comprises the steps of:

   cutting off said incident light;

   raising up said electric potential barrier;

   starting <u>reading</u> out said signal charges.

2.   **(Currently Amended)**   The method for driving a solid-state image pickup device according to Claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ <u>said</u> electric potential ~~of said electric potential~~ barrier during the read-out step is raised up by a voltage greater than 0.4.V.

3.-4.   **(Canceled).**

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5.   (Currently Amended)   The method for driving a solid-state image pickup device according to Claim 1, wherein ~~each of~~ said ~~photoelectric conversion units~~ OFD structure is ~~provided with~~ a vertical ~~overflow drain (OFD)~~ OFD structure which excludes the surplus charges by said electric potential barrier by a voltage applied to a substrate of said vertical OFD structure, which comprises the steps of:

cutting off said incident light;

raising up said electric potential barrier;

starting reading out said signal charges.

6.   (Currently Amended)   The method for driving a solid-state image pickup device according to Claim 5, wherein ~~the~~ said electric potential ~~of said electric potential~~ barrier during the read-out step is raised up by a voltage greater than 0.4V.

7.-8.   (Canceled).

9.   (Currently Amended)   The method for driving a solid-state image pickup device according to Claim 1, wherein ~~each of~~ said ~~photo-electric conversion units~~ OFD structure is ~~provided with~~ a horizontal ~~overflow drain (OFD)~~ OFD structure which excludes the surplus charges by said electric potential barrier by a voltage applied to a gate of said horizontal OFD structure, which comprises the steps of:

cutting off said incident light;

raising up said electric potential barrier;

starting reading out said signal charges.

10.   **(Currently Amended)**   The method for driving a solid-state image pickup device

according to Claim 9, wherein ~~the electric potential of~~ said electric potential barrier during the

read-out step is raised up by a voltage greater than 0.4V.

11.-12. (Canceled).

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